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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/763,254	04/05/2001	Klaus-Peter Schmoll	1500	4582

7590 12/06/2001

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EXAMINER

CUEVAS, PEDRO J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2834	

DATE MAILED: 12/06/2001

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/763,254	SCHMOLL ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Pedro J. Cuevas	2834

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____ .

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 05 April 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____ .

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6 .

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____ .

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. Figures 1-3 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

2. The spacing of the lines of the specification is such as to make reading and entry of amendments difficult. New application papers with lines double spaced on good quality paper are required.

3. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

The following title is suggested: Fracture Resistant Piezoelectric Actuator.

Claim Objections

4. The claims are objected to because the lines are crowded too closely together, making reading and entry of amendments difficult. Substitute claims with lines one and one-half or double spaced on good quality paper are required. See 37 CFR 1.52(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

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6. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

7. While applicant may be his or her own lexicographer, a term in a claim may not be given a meaning repugnant to the usual meaning of that term. See *In re Hill*, 161 F.2d 367, 73 USPQ 482 (CCPA 1947). The term "contacting" in claim 1 is used by the claim to mean "contact," while the accepted meaning is "to make contact."

8. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite in that it fails to point out what is included or excluded by the claim language.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claims 1-4 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,945,770A to Hanafy in view of U.S. Patent no. 5,245,734 to Issartel.

Hanafy clearly teaches the construction of a piezoelectric actuator with:

a multi-layered structure of piezoelectric layers (24, 26, 28) and electrodes (40, 70) disposed between them,
an alternating lateral contacting (50, 52) of the electrodes, wherein in the region between two piezoelectric layers, which contains one of the electrodes that are respectively contacted on opposite sides from one another, and

a shape of the multi-layered structure which permits an increased mechanical stress to be exerted for the purpose of providing better electrical match between the ultrasound transducer and the ultrasound system to which it is coupled to.

However, it fails to disclose a neutral phase (7) without an electrode layer.

Issartel teaches the construction of a piezoelectric actuator with a neutral phase without an electrode layer, and an insulating layer (4a) is disposed between of the layers of the multi-layered structure as shown in Figure 1.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to use the shape of the multi-layered structure disclosed by Hanafy on the neutral phase piezoelectric actuator disclosed by Issartel for the purpose of providing better electrical match between the ultrasound transducer and the ultrasound system to which it is coupled to.

11. With regards to claim 7, Hanafy in view of Issartel discloses some or all of the features of these claims are combined with one another as shown stated above.

12. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,945,770A to Hanafy in view of U.S. Patent no. 5,245,734 to Issartel as applied to claims 1-4 and 6-8 above, and further in view of common knowledge in the art.

Referring to claim 5, no patentable weight has been given to the method of manufacturing limitations (i. e. grinding), since “even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the

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claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

Conclusion

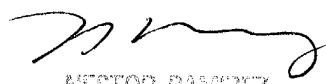
13. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892.

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Pedro J. Cuevas whose telephone number is (703) 308-4904. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 8:30 - 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Néstor R. Ramírez can be reached on (703) 308-1371. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-1341 for regular communications and (703) 305-3432 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

Pedro J. Cuevas
December 3, 2001


NESTOR RAMIREZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2000